What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

receiving on a first switching device a message from a second switching device that indicates to slow packet transmission to the second switching device.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

slowing packet transmission from the first switching device to a congested port in the second switching device.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the message identifies a congested port in the second switching device.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the message identifies a port in the first switching device transmitting packets to a congested port in the second switching device.

5. A method comprising:

transmitting from a first switching device to a second switching device a message that indicates to slow packet transmission to the first switching device.

6. The method of claim 5 further comprising:

transmitting the message from the second switching device to a third switching device.

7. The method of claim 5 wherein the first switching device includes an application-specific integrated circuit.

8. A computer program product, tangibly embodied in an information carrier, the computer program product being operable to cause a machine to:

receive on a first switching device a message from a second switching device that indicates to slow packet transmission to the second switching device.

9. The computer program product of claim 8 being further operable to cause a machine to:

slow packet transmission from the first switching device to a congested port in the second switching device.

10. The computer program product of claim 8 being further operable to cause a machine wherein the message identifies a congested port in the second switching device.

11. The computer program product of claim 8 wherein the message identifies a port in the first switching device transmitting packets to a congested port in the second switching device.

12. A computer program product, tangibly embodied in an information carrier, the computer program product being operable to cause a machine to:

transmit from a first switching device to a second switching device a message that indicates to slow packet transmission to the first switching device.

13. The computer program product of claim 12 being further operable to cause a machine to:

transmit the message from the second switching device to a third switching device.

14. The computer program product of claim 12 wherein the first switching device includes an application-specific integrated circuit.

15. A message manager comprises:

a process to receive on a first switching device a message from a second switching device that indicates to slow packet transmission to the second switching device.

16. The message manager of claim 15 further comprising:

a process to transmit from the first switching device to the second switching device a message that indicates to slow packet transmission to the first switching device.

17. The message manager of claim 15 wherein the message identifies a congested port in the second switching device.

18. A system comprising:

a first switching device capable of,

receiving a message from a second switching device that indicates to slow packet transmission to the second switching device.

19. The system of claim 18 wherein the first switching device is further capable of:

transmitting to the second switching device a message that indicates to slow packet transmission to the first switching device.

20. The system of claim 18 wherein the message identifies a congested port in the second switching device.

21. A packet forwarding device comprising:

an input port for receiving a packet;

an output port for delivering the received packet; and

a first switching device capable of,

receiving a message from a second switching device that indicates to slow packet transmission to the second switching device.

22. The packet forwarding device of claim 21 wherein the first switching device is further capable of:

transmitting to the second switching device a message that indicates to slow packet transmission to the first switching device.

23. The packet forwarding device of claim 21 wherein the message identifies a congested port in the second switching device.

24. A network switch comprising:

a first application-specific integrated circuit (ASIC) capable of receiving a message from a second ASIC that indicates to slow packet transmission to the second ASIC.

25. The network switch of claim 24 wherein the first ASIC is capable of transmitting to the ASIC a message that indicates to slow packet transmission to the first ASIC.

26. The network switch of claim 24 wherein the message identifies a congested port in the second ASIC.